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TESTING PRECOGNITION AND ALTERED STATE OF CONSCIOUSNESS WITH SELECTED PARTICIPANTS IN THE GANZFELD: A PRE-REGISTERED STUDY

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ABSTRACT

The present study was the first to contribute to a registration-based prospective meta-analysis of ganzfeld ESP studies (Watt, 2017a, b; Watt & Kennedy, 2016, 2017). We sought to maximise the anticipated psi effect size by selecting participants on one or more of the following criteria: self-reported creativity; prior psi experience or belief; practice of a mental discipline. Psi targets and decoys were short video clips randomly selected with replacement from a pool of 200. We employed an automated precognition design for simplicity and security, and to add to the small database of precognitive ganzfeld studies. The experiment was designed by CW and the computer program was written by AT. As well as predicting overall significant precognition task scoring, we tested the assumption that the ganzfeld method elicits a psi-conducive altered state of consciousness. Based on Cardeña and Marcusson-Clavertz's (2017) findings, we predicted that higher target similarity ratings (measured by session z-score) would be associated with greater evidence of ASC during the session, measured using the Phenomenology of Consciousness Inventory, and a time estimation task. **Procedure.** Three experimenters (ED, AP & HR) each conducted 20 trials. The participant reclined wearing a red eye-shield so that they perceived a uniform red visual field. Headphones first played a 9-minute progressive relaxation exercise, then played white noise for 25 minutes. The participant reported their impressions aloud and these were recorded. After the impression period ended, the participant estimated the time duration of the session. The experimenter then reviewed the participant's impressions and, when ready for the judging phase, the experiment program was progressed to randomly select one target pool. The participant rated each target for similarity to their mentation on a 1-100 scale (where 1 = no correspondence). After the participant's ratings were submitted, the PCI was completed. Finally, when the participant was ready to view the conclusion of the session, the program was advanced and the precognitive target clip was randomly selected and played to the participant for feedback. **Results.** Twenty-two direct hits were obtained out of 60 trials, corresponding to a statistically significant 36.67% hit-rate. Therefore our hypothesis that the randomly selected future target would be identified to a greater than chance degree was supported. Contrary to prediction, no significant relationship was found between measures of ASC and session Z-scores. We conclude that further ganzfeld ESP research is justified because previous extensive research with the ganzfeld has identified moderator variables that can optimise effect-size, and because the method maps on to common features of spontaneously reported paranormal experiences.

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